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Africa Review

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Africa Review

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Articles have been coordinated as appropriate with other offices within CIA. Comments and queries regarding this publication may be directed to the Chief, Production Staff, Office of African and Latin American Analysis,

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Articles

**Liberia: Aftermath of
the Assassination Attempt**

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Tension in Monrovia has eased following an unsuccessful assassination attempt on 1 April against Head of State Doe and his subsequent release from detention of leading opposition party figures, who initially were suspected of involvement with executed ringleader, Lieutenant Colonel Flanzamaton. Although the would-be assassin alluded strongly to backing from a US citizen in his public confession, Doe has avoided overt anti-US moves. Doe marked his fifth year in power on 12 April with a speech that ignored the assassination attempt and emphasized the need for national unity and economic recovery.

Despite his mild response thus far, many Liberians believe Doe sought at first to use the assassination episode as an opportunity to suppress aspiring opposition parties further and to try to obtain more support from the United States. We believe several of Doe's advisers are likely to continue to exploit his security concerns by advocating additional tampering with the process of returning to civilian government and moving toward a more nonaligned foreign policy. By concentrating on short-term political crises—many of the regime's own making—Doe will continue to divert resources away from dealing with a deteriorating economic situation that may, in the long run, prove a greater threat to his tenure.

The regime's swift arrest of leading opposition figures and the implausibility of Flanzamaton's assertions of opposition and US involvement led many observers to speculate that Doe was using the attack as a pretext to hamstringing the opposition and to pressure the United States for more support. Flanzamaton claimed that a US citizen and the leaders of three opposition parties offered him \$1 million to kill Doe. Liberian security services promptly detained Gabriel Matthews, leader of the populist United People's Party; Edward Kesselly, head of the centrist Unity party; and Tuan Wreh and Harry Greaves, leaders of the moderate Liberian Action Party. Rumors of mistreatment of the opposition politicians led their followers to threaten mass demonstrations if the leaders were not released.

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Three days after his initial allegations, Flanzamaton recanted, and claimed several key military leaders were involved. Flanzamaton was summarily executed, while 15 officers and enlisted men who responded inadequately to the attack were sent to prison. Doe released the civilian politicians, who appeared to have been well treated and who called for a standdown from demonstrations. Although the release defused tensions in Monrovia, Doe's motorcade was jeered by crowds.

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The Assassination Attempt

Flanzamaton, deputy commander of the Executive Mansion Guard, fired 30 rounds from a 50-caliber machinegun into Doe's jeep. Doe managed to escape unhurt, but two of his bodyguards were injured. Flanzamaton was arrested three days later outside Monrovia, and executed on 8 April.

Lingering Doubts

The US Embassy reports that many Liberians remain skeptical of the government's version of events. According to the Embassy, Doe is almost always accompanied by fellow Krahn bodyguards, yet the

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two guards injured were from other ethnic groups. Liberians who have viewed the jeep wonder how anyone could have escaped unharmed. Flanzamaton reportedly calmly walked away and was still in Monrovia three days after the attack. Flanzamaton's initial confession also raised doubts. He reportedly seemed unfamiliar with the names of those whom he was accusing and appeared to be using notes. []

Political Opposition

Doe still appears committed to returning to civilian government providing he can control the process and emerge as an elected president. Successful elections, scheduled for October would allow him to claim domestic and international legitimacy, while scuttling the transition would increase the potential for instability. Rioting is likely if Doe makes himself president without benefit of elections. Many Liberians no longer believe a fair election is possible. []

Although opposition party leaders were cleared and released, their participation in the return to civilian government remains uncertain. Doe's efforts to secure his election as president are making it difficult for more than one or two lesser parties to organize and register. At the moment, no party outside Doe's own National Democratic Party of Liberia is fully registered. As the registration deadline draws near, the two major opposition parties probably will not be allowed to complete the process in time, and protest demonstrations are possible. []

While opposition party leaders are trying to restrain their followers, tensions are likely to heighten as the election approaches. Serious confrontation, violence, or a coup could be triggered by several events, including an overreaction by Doe to an opposition demonstration, or his blatant manipulation of the elections. []

Several options remain open to opposition leaders. They could choose to back a single candidate. Another alternative would be to seek a coalition with Doe in hopes of obtaining some of their objectives by working within the administration. Several leaders have proposed a boycott to tarnish the outcome of the elections. []

Military Reaction

In recent months, the combined effect of a deteriorating economy, delinquent payment of salaries, and constant political uncertainty has eroded morale and discipline within the armed forces. Contributing to the malaise is the growing belief among many officers that the Army will be dragged into inevitable political violence, with resultant military casualties. Individual acts of insubordination are increasing. []

The open grumbling of many troops about Doe's failings makes Flanzamaton's charge of military involvement more credible than his previous claim of civilian backing. Several military officers, including Emanuel Seyon, the former commander of the Executive Mansion Guard, have been sentenced in connection with Flanzamaton's action. Some officers whom Flanzamaton implicated have been put on short rations, while others—considered loyal by Doe—have received promotions. []

Any future attempts against Doe will most likely be taken by an independent actor or by a small group such as those who participated in Doe's original takeover. [] military units outside Monrovia suffer from poor communications and coordination and could do little to prevent such a coup. []

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Economic Mismanagement

Doe's preoccupation with real and imagined threats to his regime has diverted him from dealing with economic problems and long-term development planning. Recent announcements of revenue collection schemes, stopgap responses to the banking crisis, and draconian punishment of debtors—which the government claims sparked Flanzamaton's attack—underscore the regime's inability to comprehend the causes of and cures for the country's economic woes. Many of these moves have been made in the mistaken belief that they will be popular with the electorate. []

The administration's short-term measures are burdening the economy with immediate problems. While there is a plentiful supply of rice in the warehouses in Monrovia, a shortage exists in the marketplace. Doe's attempts to collect outstanding debts have created a severe cash shortage, while retailers can obtain rice from the warehouse only on a cash-and-carry basis. Queues of 50 to 60 frustrated buyers have been seen at many of Monrovia's stores. Riots over government efforts to increase the retail price of rice during the waning days of the Tolbert administration paved the way for Doe's takeover five years ago. []

Slack world demand for Liberia's iron ore and rubber exports, together with fiscal mismanagement, is the major factor contributing to the economic crisis. Liberia's use of the US dollar as its currency has increased import costs and eroded export competitiveness because the dollar is appreciating. Liberia's ship registry, the largest in the world and an important revenue earner, is declining due to increased competition and stagnation in world maritime commerce. []

With the help of the IMF and the US Economic Support Fund program, plus several debt reschedulings, Liberia has managed to bump along from one financial crisis to another. But the country has a less than satisfactory record in implementing austerity measures needed to create a basis for structural adjustments. The regime's administrative weakness and frequent lapses in fiscal discipline have been key obstacles to effective implementation of

reforms. Pervasive corruption, capital flight, and political uncertainty also have hampered economic recovery. []

In the absence of a sharp increase in export earnings, continued large capital inflows to Liberia are essential to stave off an extreme financial crisis and to set the stage for economic recovery. A further sharp drop in Liberia's economic fortunes could threaten the transition to civilian government. []

Senior Liberian officials recently met with US advisers in hopes of finding solutions to Liberia's economic and financial problems. Topics for discussion included Liberia's tax system, currency problems, and inefficient public corporations. While long-range goals and objectives might be agreed upon, Liberia's track record on implementing economic reforms does not bode well for the future. []

Implications for the United States

The attempted assassination illustrates the fragility of the political situation in Liberia, where the United States has important military access rights, communications facilities, and investments totaling \$430 million. Although the United States has been cleared of allegations of involvement in the assassination attempt, we suspect that Foreign Minister Eastman is still maneuvering to put Washington on the defensive. He has long favored a more nonaligned and less pro-US foreign policy. He probably would like Doe to make new demands, including more bilateral economic aid, rent for US communication facilities, and bonuses for Doe's senior military colleagues, who are scheduled for retirement if a civilian government is installed in January. []

Eastman may try to capitalize on the recent trip to Liberia of Ambassador Marchuk, Soviet Ministry of Foreign Affairs Deputy Chief of the Second African Department, which was planned well in advance of the assassination attempt. Marchuk sought an exchange of ambassadors and a resumption of talks on economic cooperation and trade relations with Liberia. []

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Congo: Sassou Under Fire

Moderate President Sassou-Nguesso is facing increased opposition from hardline leftist party officials who feel threatened by his moves in the last two years to consolidate power and to improve ties with the West. In addition, there are [redacted] grumbling from the armed forces over government policies and the poor state of military preparedness. We believe Sassou will move quickly to try to suppress opposition and shore up support in the military and party. Failing that, he may be forced to slow or even reverse Congo's recent turn Westward. [redacted]

Sources of Discontent

President Sassou's military-based and highly factionalized regime, which has ruled since 1979, is dominated by fellow northern officers who are loosely allied with southern civilians. Many of the civilians are entrenched in the single ruling party and civil service. Although leftists are represented in the regime's military and civilian ranks, moderates presently predominate under Sassou. In recent years, Sassou has liberalized the economy, increased the influence of moderates at the expense of ideologues, reduced Congo's dependence on the Soviet Union, and improved relations with the West in search of needed economic aid and private investment. [redacted]

[redacted] discontent with Sassou among party hardliners, smoldering since last July's party congress, has become more open and now threatens Sassou's control over the party. Sassou created numerous enemies at the congress when he removed or demoted a number of influential hardline officials opposed to improved relations with the West. Sassou also has alienated senior party members by bypassing the party on important decisions. In addition, [redacted] he has refused repeated requests by some party officials to release Thystere Tchicaya, the party's leading leftist ideologue, who once was the second most powerful figure in Congo. Tchicaya is being held on questionable charges of coup plotting. [redacted]

In Tchicaya's absence, Pierre Nze, a senior party member with close ties to the Soviets, probably is leading hardline opposition to Sassou. The President replaced Nze as Foreign Minister after the party congress because his hardline views conflicted with Sassou's policy of improving relations with the West. [redacted]

In our view, Nze has support in the Politburo—the party's principal decisionmaking body. He may be planning to confront Sassou at the next Politburo meeting, a move that probably would lead to an open power struggle. According to the US Embassy, Nze recently held a private strategy meeting with fellow hardliners in the party and Cabinet that was attended by the Cuban Ambassador. [redacted]

[redacted] the military's operational capability is at its lowest point ever because of budget cuts, lack of spare parts, mismanagement, and theft. [redacted] over 80 percent of the officer corp is composed of Communist-trained military officers, many of whom support closer cooperation

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with the Soviet Union. Senior officers met recently to discuss the problems of the military in preparation for a meeting with Sassou, according to the US Embassy.

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The Embassy reports that Sassou has instituted extraordinary security measures at recent presidential functions.

[REDACTED]

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Outlook

Brazzaville clearly is undergoing one of its periodic power struggles.

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[REDACTED] Although we believe that, on balance, key military and security leaders still support Sassou, this support could erode rapidly if he does not defuse the current situation. Sassou probably will attempt to reach a compromise with hardliners, perhaps by offering to slow Congo's move Westward. An increase in hardline influence probably would result in improved relations with the Soviets, diminish US access to senior Congolese officials, and lead to increased anti-Western rhetoric.

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Mozambique: Sources of Economic Assistance

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Unrealistic economic policies, insurgency, and four straight years of alternating drought and floods have left Mozambique increasingly dependent on external economic aid. Despite the country's Marxist policies and dependence on Soviet Bloc military aid, the bulk of economic assistance has come from Western countries.

Western Bilateral Aid

In 1984, Mozambique received about \$180 million in economic assistance from the West.¹ The United States, Italy, Sweden, the Netherlands, and the United Kingdom provided for about 80 percent of this aid, according to US Embassy reporting.

Aside from drought relief, which comprised roughly one-fourth of all incoming aid, the majority of Western assistance was earmarked for agricultural and industrial rehabilitation in accordance with Maputo's emphasis on restoring existing facilities rather than building new ones. France and Denmark have contributed to agricultural production and marketing, while Germany, Switzerland, and Italy have focused on the industrial sector.

Mozambique has become a priority country in the Italian aid program. Traditionally, Maputo has been the second-largest recipient of Italian project aid, and last year was the second-largest recipient of food and emergency aid as well. In 1984, Italy contributed \$39.4 million in assistance, according to Embassy reporting. Of that amount, \$12.4 million was devoted to emergency aid, and \$18.7 million went to infrastructure projects.

¹ Although we are able to distinguish most aid commitments from actual disbursements, about 15 percent of the \$180 million figure consists of promised aid. Such commitments apparently are included in the figures for France, Sweden, Italy, and the Netherlands.

The Swedish Government's aim is to decrease Mozambican dependence on South Africa and to improve food supplies. Aid is concentrated in import substitution, rehabilitation and maintenance of infrastructure, and support to family farms.

The Netherlands's assistance consists mostly of balance-of-payments and agricultural support. The Hague is helping with the rehabilitation of the port of Beira and the city's sewer system.

The British recently have articulated a strong interest in the viability of the Machel government, but, due to financial stringency in Whitehall, this interest has not substantially boosted British aid, which totaled \$14 million in 1984. This included \$3.7 million in new aid, \$8.8 million from previous commitments, and \$1.7 million for disaster relief.

Other Western Aid

Western multilateral organizations also have been helpful to Mozambique. The European Community contributed about \$8 million for development assistance in 1984, and gave \$16 million in emergency food aid. Partly as a condition for debt rescheduling, Mozambique joined the International Monetary Fund and World Bank in 1984. This gives Maputo access to about \$62 million in special drawing rights from the IMF.

The October 1984 Paris Club rescheduling of Mozambique's bilateral debt to the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development countries provides for \$404 million in principal repayments that came due from July 1984 to June 1985 to be spread

Major Contributors of Economic Assistance

Million US \$

	Total Assistance	Amount of Total Designated for Emergency Aid
1. United States	40.50	15.80
2. Italy	39.40	12.40
3. Sweden	30.80	... ^a
4. Netherlands	17.30	... ^a
5. United Kingdom	14.00	1.70
6. Soviet Union	13.00	NA
7. France	11.80	... ^b
8. Denmark	8.30	0.05 ^c
9. Japan	7.80	0.60
10. China	5.00	NA
11. Switzerland	3.80	... ^a
12. West Germany	2.30	1.00
13. Belgium	2.30	... ^a
14. Norway	1.20	... ^a
15. Portugal	0.30	0.05
16. Romania	0.06	NA

^a No *bilateral* emergency relief contributed, however, some emergency aid distributed through independent organizations.

^b Total does not include 5,000 tons of food aid.

^c Total does not include powdered milk donation of 400 tons.

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out over ten and a half years. Prior to the debt renegotiation, Mozambique's debt service ratio was 45 percent—one of the highest in Africa. Without this debt relief, Mozambique could not have continued to import consumer goods.

Eastern Aid

According to the US Embassy, East Bloc countries provided only about \$18 million² in economic assistance last year—one-tenth of the West's total. The largest Bloc donor was the Soviet Union, which granted about \$13 million worth of assistance. Other East European countries gave small amounts of

² This excludes the extensive Bloc advisory presence in Mozambique. The East Germans, for example, have hundreds of personnel involved in agriculture and in mineral and natural gas exploration projects.

emergency drought relief. China also assisted Maputo with a grant of approximately \$5 million worth of consumer goods.

Outlook

For the most part, we believe that Maputo's ability to continue attracting bilateral aid will depend on its effectiveness in dealing with insurgents, who are now active in all 10 provinces and show no sign of abating their attacks. Guerrilla activity already has forced several countries to withdraw advisers from rural areas, and we expect donors to become increasingly reluctant to fund projects that cannot be protected from sabotage. While the United States and several

European countries want to provide economic assistance to encourage Mozambique's turn to the West, the continuing guerrilla attacks perpetuate Maputo's dependence on the East for military assistance.



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Brief****Sierra Leone****Stevens To Stay on Temporarily**

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Sierra Leone's parliament has granted 85-year-old President Siaka Stevens—whose term expires in June—a six-month extension, to allow more time to arrange an acceptable solution to the country's looming succession crisis. The ruling All People's Congress party postponed its scheduled mid-April convention—which was to either confirm Stevens for another seven-year term or announce his designated successor—allegedly because voter lists were not drawn up, according to the US Embassy. While Stevens recently indicated he will step down after the extension ends, some of his colleagues believe he will never yield the post. Others speculate Stevens will indeed resign if he is confident a successor can protect his reputation and economic interests.

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In the meantime, General Momoh—the head of the military and current leading candidate either to replace Stevens or to be named the first vice president and hence the designated successor to the presidency—is continuing to lobby for broad-based tribal and Army support. US Embassy reporting indicates that some leading civilian politicians, including chronically ill First Vice President S. I. Koroma—who is expected to be removed from office at the convention—have not accepted Momoh as the President's successor. Stevens's delay in deciding his future and the stagnant economy may fuel discontent among junior officers who are said to be eager to see some change.

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